

# Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: March 15-16, 2006

Reference No.: 2.2b.  
Action Item

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Ref: **SUMMARY – DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, STATE ROUTE 99 IN  
MERCED COUNTY – REALIGN AND WIDEN TO SIX-LANE FREEWAY NEAR MERCED**

## **ISSUE:**

The California Transportation Commission (Commission) is being asked to review and comment at the March 2006 Commission meeting on the following Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR):

- 10-Mer-99, PM 0.0/6.5, Realign and widen to six-lane freeway near Merced in Merced County.

## **PROGRAMMING:**

This project is not fully funded. This project is programmed in the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program for \$33,730,000 in Interregional Improvement Program funds and \$10,000,000 in Traffic Congestion Relief Program funds for capital and support. The total estimated project cost is \$221,880,000. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2007-08.

## **ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED:**

This project consists of two sections: the southern Plainsburg section and the northern Arboleda section. In the Plainsburg section, there are four build alternatives and the no-build alternative; in the Arboleda section, there are two build alternatives and the no-build alternative. One alternative from each section would be selected. The selection of an alternative for one section does not limit which alternative can be selected for the other section.

All build alternatives would widen the existing four-lane highway to a six-lane freeway, widen to the east of the current alignment, upgrade shoulders, and construct two new interchanges. Each build alternative would place the interchanges in slightly different locations along the alignment.

**POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:**

- Farmland converted – approximately 750 to 1,350 acres.
- Noise impacts – sixteen receptors met the Federal Highway Administration criteria for consideration of noise abatement, but only two locations (with five receptors) were deemed reasonable to construct.
- Impacts to two archaeological sites.

Because there will be unmitigated potentially significant impacts, an Environmental Impact Report with a Statement of Overriding Considerations is being prepared.

**PROPOSED MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM:**

- Construct noise abatement where feasible and reasonable.
- Execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office to mitigate potential impacts to historic and archaeological resources. Designate environmentally sensitive areas for cultural resources not directly affected by construction activities.

Attachment

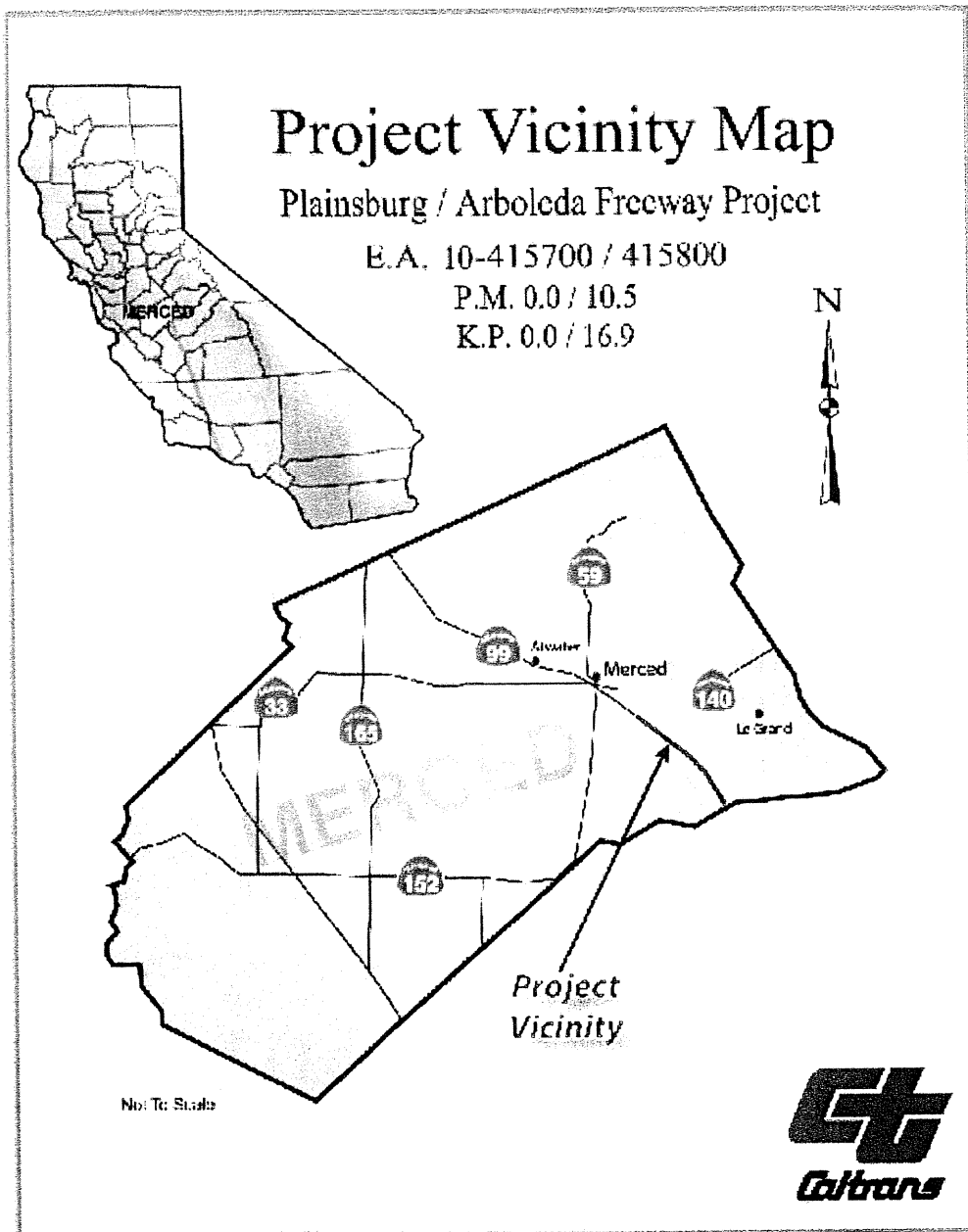


Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map